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ABSTRACT

UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization) believes provision of technical and vocational education and training (TVET) to prepare qualified technicians and skilled and semi-skilled workers should be an essential component of the development agenda of all countries. It is about to draft a plan of action for the development of the field of TVET during the next 10 years. Proposed objectives in UNESCO's future strategy are strengthening TVET as an integral component of lifelong education; orientating TVET for sustainable development; and providing TVET for all. UNESCO plans to launch an International Program on TVET to meet UNESCO member states' demand to upgrade its activities and provide them with more effective assistance in TVET. The program actions would be designed and implemented through the following modalities: improving member states' policy making capacity; assisting member states' institutional capacity building; and enhancing international cooperation. The proposed structure for implementation of UNESCO's International Program on TVET is forging an international alliance in support of TVET; giving responsibility to the Secretariat for program planning and monitoring and promotion of cooperation with other international partners; launching a one-stop website dedicated to supporting TVET and the TVET Implementation Center; and establishing an International Center for TVET in Bonn and a number of regional centers. (YLB)

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UNESCO's Programme on Technical and Vocational Education for the First Decade of the New Millennium

A speech addressed to the

Second International Congress on Technical and Vocational Education

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Mr Chairperson,

Distinguished Participants and Observers,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The deliberations during the last three days have brought to us the realization that the growing economic globalization has created a new international agenda for development. Theworld is moving towards an information-based economy where the effectiveness of an enterprise or a country is determined by the quality of its products and services. Production systems based on new technologies that enable greater productivity and flexibility demand that all workers constantly must update their skills and become more entrepreneurial. The evidence clearly shows that the most productive nations are those characterised by a flexible and well-qualified labour market, one with a rich and diverse mix of skills which are continuously updated and developed throughout life. Thus, the theme of our Congress: *lifelong learning and training for all, a bridge to the future*

As we have heard during these discussions, technical and vocational education and training (TVET) is most directly concerned with the acquisition of the knowledge and skills required for the world of work, formal and informal, urban and rural. And every country must adapt its TVET programme to cater to the skill requirements of its workplace of the twenty-first century. We have seen that these skills requirements may vary considerably according to the stage of socio-economic development of each country. Nevertheless, it has been clearly demonstrated that every country, regardless of its state of development, is compelled to re-design its national TVET programme if it is to address effectively the employment and development, issues of the next century. As the recent Asian experience shows, the economic situation can change dramatically suddenly, creating massive problems of unemployment and forcing many young people to opt for self-employment in the future. Thus the need to develop more coherent education, training and employment policies, and to find

ways to co-ordinate the work of Ministers of Education, Labour and Social Welfare.

Yet again, a major international forum has stressed that the current international developmental paradigm cannot continue indefinitely because of its adverse impact on the environment, on education and the social sector. You have stated that a sustainable development paradigm must be arrived at and that the TVET of the future must not only prepare individuals for employment in the information society, but also make them responsible citizens who give due consideration to preserving the integrity of their environment and the welfare of others. You have stressed the need for TVET programmes to be not only "demand driven", but also "developmental need driven". Here development includes all social, economic, personal and environmental aspects.

You have also expressed the view that TVE must commence during the period of general education in order to expose children to a range of applied life skills and experiences. Above all, TVET programmes must be delivered in a flexible manner so that they are accessible to all social groups and to all age groups. In other words, we need to provide lifelong learning opportunities for all. You have pointed out quite often that providing basic learning opportunities to the marginalized youth excluded from the formal education system is a challenging task for many developing countries. TVET can, without doubt, serve as a possible channel for educating marginalized youth by mobilizing them to learn while they work in small and medium-sized industries.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

You have stressed that many of the developing countries lack the technical and financial resources to redesign their TVET programmes. Unfortunately, we have also witnessed in recent years a significant decline in development co-operation funds provided by the industrialised countries and funding agencies. We have heard your call for vastly increased multilateral and bilateral development co-operation for TVET. In today's inter-dependent world, it is undoubtedly in the interests of the industrialised countries to provide tangible support to the efforts being made by

developing countries to develop their human resources and to break the vicious cycle of poverty, inequity, unemployment, violence. As you have said, unemployment is now an international problem, one which cannot be contained within national boundaries.

We strongly believe that provision of technical and vocational education and training aiming to prepare qualified technicians and skilled and semi-skilled workers should be an essential component of the development agenda of all countries. TVET is a bridge to the future, but there must be an employment road to which it leads, otherwise we create further problems. Thus we need not just a revitalised and more coherent TVET programme, but a new vision for TVET and employment – we need new models of TVETE, linking education, training, employment and social welfare, nationally and internationally.

On the occasion of the Congress, UNESCO would like to call upon all international organisations with an interest in technical and vocational education and training to join our efforts in serving the needs of all countries, particularly the developing nations, in reforming their TVET systems. We should share our expertise and take concrete joint actions to prepare their workforces for the challenges of the twenty-first century. A co-ordinated strategy should be adopted so that synergistic results may be obtained from the resources and effort invested. In this connection, the *Convention on Technical and Vocational Education* adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO in 1989 may be utilized as a valuable reference for developing the framework of such joint endeavours.

On the basis of the recommendations formulated during a number of regional and sub-regional preparatory conferences prior to the Congress and the discussions during the last three days, we are about to draft a plan of action for the development of the field of TVET during the next ten years. Complementary to this plan of action will be UNESCO's future strategy and activities in TVE, and links with training and thus with the ILO.

I should like to outline the proposed main objectives in UNESCO's future strategy. This set of objectives is by no means intended to be conclusive and exhaustive. They only reflect the priorities that we consider to be within UNESCO's mandates and fields of competence.

Objective 1 Strengthening TVE as an integral component of lifelong education

In an era characterised by the challenge of globalisation, rapid technological changes and economic uncertainty, it is imperative that all stakeholders work together to develop legislation and policies, establish institutional structures and redesign curricula to ensure that TVET caters adequately to the varied needs of all members of society to enter and re-enter the world of work. For this purpose, continuous TVET opportunities should be provided for achieving both personal and social development. UNESCO's activities therefore should aim at:

- Including vocational subjects in general education curricula to facilitate the young generation to obtain generic technologica knowledge and key pre-vocational skills - making TVET for all an integral part of national educational policy;

- Developing the articulation between technical and vocational education on the one hand, and other sectors of education on the other, emphasising the recognition of prior learning and work experience, and raising the status of TVET in education systems;

- Promoting co-ordination between formal education and informal training systems, Ministries responsible for education, training, labour and social welfare;

- Fostering the involvement of all stakeholders, particularly private sectors, in the provision of TVETE and improving the link and co-operation with the world of work.

Objective 2 Orientating TVET for sustainable development

TVET can play an instrumental role in developing a new generation of individuals who will face the challenge of achieving sustainable socio-economic development. A number of new subjects (issues) therefore need to be incorporated into TVET teaching and learning or be further emphasised for the sake of the future of all of us as we struggle to learn throughout life. A well-trained technical workforce is essential for any country's efforts to achieve sustainable development. Thus, UNESCO's activities should aim at:

- Ensuring that TVET is an integral part of every nation's development agenda, and a valued and integral part of its education and human resource development strategy;

- Including environmental issues in all TVET curricula with the objective of promoting the concept of sustainable development;

- Emphasising the acquisition of entrepreneurial skills, creativity, team and communication skills as part of TVET;

- Introducing and applying the new information and communication technologies in the TVET teaching and learning process without losing valuable aspects of traditional teaching methods;

- Paying special attention to providing training for the tourism and hospitality industries which are a potential avenue towards employment creation and economic growth in the developing world.

Objective 3 Providing TVE for all

Besides preparing people for the world of work, TVE is also expected to be an instrument for social cohesion and integration. The general access to and availability of TVE and the right to work are closely inter-linked issues. UNESCO will therefore assist Member States in their efforts to make TVETE programmes

comprehensive and adequately inclusive in order to accommodate the needs of all learners. UNESCO's activities in this respect should aim at:

- Promoting special initiatives and efforts to ensure equal access to TVE for girls and women, and to eliminate the very strong historic gender basis against women which has for too long characterised TVET policy and practice;

- Making TVET programmes, both formal rind informal, available to the unemployed and various marginalized groups including early school leavers, the disabled, the rural poor, displaced persons and demobilised soldiers in post-conflict situations, contributing to the UN effort to alleviate poverty;

- Re-orienting vocational guidance and counselling to reach out to all members of society;

- Promoting flexible access to lifelong learning and training.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

To meet the major challenges posed by the requirement for human resources development, UNESCO's Member States have petitioned the Organization to up-grade its activities in TVE, and to provide them with more effective assistance in this field. UNESCO plans to launch an International Programme on Technical and Vocational Education from the beginning of the 2000-2001 biennium to meet such a demand. The following is a proposed framework of this Programme. After this Congress, the objectives and the framework will be modified in accordance with your comments and suggestions. A document on the proposal of this new Programme will then be submitted to the 30th session of UNESCO's General Conference in November 1999 for approval.

The Programme actions will be designed and implemented through the following modalities:

A Improving Member States' policy making capacity

The following actions will be planned to assist Member States' efforts in formulating relevant policies for the development of TVET as a component of national development agenda:

- Providing national decision-makers with comparative and analytical information on national policies; for reforming TVET systems, best practices of TVET delivery models and research findings in various Member States;

- Conducting international, regional and sub-regional meetings for policy-makers, professionals and researchers to exchange views, experiences, TVET curricula and teaching packages and ideas;

- Identifying the factors that determine the quality and pertinence of TVET with a view to improving its status and attractiveness in education systems;

- In co-operation with Member States, rationalising and refining the collection of national statistics relating to TVET and developing indicators to facilitate decision making, planning and assessment at the national and international level;

- Providing information and assistance to Member States on formulating the national legislative framework for TVET.

B Assisting Member States' institutional capacity building

The following actions will be planned to strengthen TVE institutions' capacities in research, development and training:

- Supporting regional activities and providing guidelines to Member States on the preparation of TVE teaching and training personnel;

- Assisting Member States in using information/communication technologies as a tool for teaching and learning both in direct contact and in distance learning mode;

- Compiling an annotated inventory of existing methodologies, instruments and tools for the development of TVET systems and various delivery patterns;

- Implementing projects for developing sample modular materials and interactive learning packages for Internet & Intranet use.

C Enhancing international co-operation

Actions to promote international co-operation in TVE will emphasise North-South and South-South exchanges, as well as co-operation among countries with similar problems. This will also include efforts to strengthen the capacity for internationa communication of UNEVOC Centres in less privileged communication environments, particularly in the least developed countries, in small States and in some parts of Africa;

- Collecting and disseminating information on curricular competencies in order to enhance the uniformity and portability of vocational skills, competencies and credentials among countries and regions;

- Strengthening the existing UNEVOC Network and improving the capacity of national UNEVOC Centres as both centres of information and action;

- Establishing close co-operation with other UN agencies, donor agencies, development banks and NGOs active in TVET, generating an alliance (as for EFA) in support of TVET and the new vision generated by the Seoul Congress;

- dvocacy in support of TVET as an integral part of the development agenda of bilateral and multilateral donors and financial institutions, promoting debt swaps and debt relief for education and training and respect for national human development priorities;

- Matchmaking among national projects, donor agencies and relevant NGOs;

- Initiating international events that would draw public attention to TVET.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Please allow me to describe briefly the proposed structure for the implementation of UNESCO's International Programme on Technical and Vocational Education:

UNESCO will seek to forge an international alliance in support of TVET. In particular, we expect to forge a common policy with the ILO for the joint development and execution of policies and programmes aimed at the alleviation of poverty and the strengthening of links among education, training and employment, but drawing in other partners such as the World Bank, the European Training Foundation, SEAMEO, KRIVET, CINTERFOR, to name a few.

UNESCO with the help of several key bilateral donors (e.g. BMZ, USAID), partners like KRIVET and UNEVOC Certres in Australia, France, Greece, Brazil, Korea, United Arab Emirates and elsewhere will support its UNEVOC Network and will provide tangible support to its 190 national centres, sponsoring fellowships and exchanges aimed at promoting national capacity-building and international co-operation for the renewal of TVE.

The overall planning and monitoring of UNESCO's long term Programme on Technical and Vocational Education will be the responsibility of the Secretariat at UNESCO Headquarters, and will promote co-operation with other international partners. Particular attention will be paid to enhancing co-operation and promoting activities at regional and sub-regional levels. The major UNESCO field offices in Bangkok, Beirut, Dakar and Santiago and the regional networks of educational innovation for development shall continue to play the key role in the implementation of the recommendations of the Seoul Congress.

UNESCO, with the collaboration of ILO, will launch a one-stop website on the Internet dedicated to supporting TVE, to be known as the "TVET Implementation Centre". It will place online critical information and guidelines, examples of best practices, etc.

with guided search and assist features, to cater for users of different levels in Member countries. It will carry extensive references and links to resources at other sites, generating greater development and use of these. This "implementation tool" will increase the efficacy of missions and consultancies, which must continue.

With a generous offer made by the Government of Germany, the establishment of an International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education in Bonn has been proposed. This Centre is expected to be the technical backbone supporting the internationa UNEVOC Network and strengthening the capacity of national UNEVOC Centres by providing a) clearing-house service, i.e. providing information, conducting research and studies; and b) training of personnel from national UNEVOC centres. **The TVET Implementation website will also be located here.** I would like to express, once again, UNESCO's appreciation to the Government of Germany for their continuous support to UNESCO's activities in the field of technical and vocational education.

Within the framework of this international network, a number of regional centres shall be established with UNESCO's support, in order to facilitate the networking and programme activities implemented at the regional and/or sub-regional levels. Several Member States (including Australia, Brazil, Pakistan, Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, etc) have already proposed to host such regional centres. In accordance with the specific strengths of these centres, they may also assume the functions of Centres of Excellence in given field such as the application of new information/communication technology in TVET.

While UNESCO is the leading agency in the United Nations System in the field of education, many other intergovernmental and non-governmental agencies also deal with various aspects of education and training. In planning and implementing its Programme on Technical and Vocational Education, UNESCO wil seek to develop close co-operation with other partners giving the Programme an interagency character. In this connection, I am very pleased to mention that UNESCO and the ILO have agreed in principle to formulate a joint policy framework in technical and

vocational education and training with the goal of strengthening the currently ongoing co-operation between the two Organizations in this field.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The above-mentioned long-term TVE programme will be UNESCO's response to the demands of Member States to expand our activities with a new approach, a new vision of TVETE for ALL particularly for girls and women, and all countries, during the first decade of the next century. It is my sincere hope that all UNESCO's Member States and relevant IGOs and NGOs in this field will join our efforts to make TVET an effective tool for lifelong learning and training, and a bridge to a better and more prosperous future.

Thank you.

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